



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**
Galveston District

The Sand Castle

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UPCOMING EVENTS

January 11
Herbie Maurer's
Retirement Luncheon

January 12
Herbie Maurer's
Retirement Dinner

January 17
HOLIDAY

January 19
PRB

January 20
Mike McClenan
Retirement Party

February 8
Division PRB

Retirement Party Announcements

**Please join us in celebrating
the careers of two great
civilian employees.**

Herbie Maurer Retirement Luncheon

When: Jan. 11, 2005
Where: Conference Room 175
Time: 11:30 a.m.
Food: Mexican
Cost: \$12.00 per person
Tickets can be purchased from the following employees: Art Janecka, Gloria Brunt, Pat Agee, and Faye Arenz

Mike McClenan Retirement Party

When: Jan. 20, 2005
Where: Conference Room 175
Time: 1:30 p.m.
Food: Cake and punch



Leap into action with *Toad in the Road*

Do you have an idea that will improve working conditions, eliminate unnecessary bureaucracy, increase efficiency and productivity or save money?

The Galveston District held its first *Toad in the Road* forum Nov. 3 with huge success.

Some of the suggestions mentioned included: an ATM machine in the building, to have dist F access for everyone, off-site fitness center, more fire alarm practices, signage for the water fountains, on-site childcare, and reinstating the supply store.

"The *Toad in the Road* Program gives the employees an opportunity to submit ideas that

could better the district," said Lt. Col. Chris Sallese, deputy district engineer.

Here's how it works, once a quarter, the Commander and a recorder will be available in conference room 185 to hear employee suggestions.

Each suggestion will be quickly evaluated and the employee will either receive an answer on the spot or be told the suggestion is being referred for further staffing.

All referred suggestions will be completed by the next TIR meeting. Employees will be notified of the outcome for all suggestions. Employees not wishing to stand in front of the

commander or who are unavailable to attend the meeting may submit their suggestions to the Commander's Secretary, Ms. Wanda Hollman, by calling or by email at wanda.v.hollman@usace.army.mil.

All employees presenting suggestions will be provided with a TIR T-shirt or other incentive. At the Commander's discretion, employee's suggestions may also be eligible for a Commander's Cash Award. Employee's suggestions that may have benefit the entire Army will be forwarded to the Department of the Army under the Army Ideas for Excellence Program.

Harris County Precinct 3 dedicates trail through Barker Reservoir

On October 27, 2004, Harris County Precinct 3 dedicated a new 4 mile section of asphalt trail through Barker Reservoir is west Houston. With the opening of this section of trail, hikers and bikers are able to travel from the subdivisions west of Barker Reservoir to the Sam Houston Tollway via Terry Hershey Park down Buffalo Bayou without having to mix with traffic on any major roadways.

Approximately 50 people including those on bikes ready to use the trails attended the dedication.

Ray Miller emceed the ceremony. Steve Radack, Commissioner of Harris County Precinct 3, along with Terry Hershey of the Jake and Terry Hershey Foundation, and Richard Long, Park Manager for the Houston Project Office of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, addressed the gathering.

"With the ever increasing population of the west Houston area, the value of lands such as Addicks and Barker Reservoirs continue to increase," said Richard Long. "Not only for flood control but for recreation as well. It is the goal of the Corps to see that these lands

See Trail continue on page 2..



"I saw mommy DANCING with Santa Claus?" That's not how the song goes...but Joy Smith, real estate, shares the dance floor with Santa (Rick Harrison, chief of real estate).

Swingin' in the holiday season

The holidays came and went in a whirlwind of events for the district! From the successful Salvation Army food drive to the large quantity of presents given for the Angel tree, it was a season for giving.

"This year's Angel Tree was successful in that approximately one hundred children had the opportunity to experience the "magic" of Christmas," said Ana Gordon, real estate. According to Linda Fredendall in contracting, the Corps is a primary corporate sponsor for this program.

December 10 not only marked the end of the Angel Tree, but it was also the day of the district's holiday party.

This year's festivities were held at the newly restored

Balinese Room in Galveston with a catered Italian meal.

The party began with Col. Haustein's opening remarks to the 220-plus sized crowd of Corps employees, friends and retirees.

The band played a variety of music throughout the afternoon breaking every thirty minutes for door prize drawings. Some of the prizes included gift certificates to local restaurants and hardware stores, food baskets, and an one night stay at an infamous island hotel.

"Our goal at the holiday party this year was to bring everyone together to have a good time and I hope we succeeded," expressed Chris Wrbas, recreation committee member. "

Commander's Column



Col. Steven P. Haustein



The Sand Castle

www.swg.usace.army.mil

*A newsletter for and by
the employees of the
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Col. Steven Haustein*

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December is such a great time of year. It's the first month where Mother Nature really lets you know its winter. December is full of beginnings and endings. And Team Galveston is also full of beginnings and endings this month.

We will soon be saying farewell to a number of valued Team Galveston members who are retiring. Among them is Ed Harrington will be leaving the Office of Counsel, who has provided a tremendous foundation for our legal team and will be sorely missed. Mike McClenan, chief of the Bay Area Office, will be retiring in mid-January. His knowledge of the Texas coastline and its navigation channels will be sorely missed. Herbie Maurer, my right hand, will be leaving after the New Year. His contribution to the development of the Texas coast for the last 40-plus years cannot be overstated. We wish all of these individuals the very best in their well-deserved retirement. Team Galveston will miss them for their professionalism, competence and friendship.

I wanted to mention three recent events that were absolute successes. First, the command inspection was a homerun. I wish everyone could have attended the out-briefing at the end of the inspection. The team from SWD had nothing but positive remarks to deliver after the two-day inspection. I want to thank everyone who had a role in making this the huge success. Second, I wanted to mention the District Annual Holiday Party (thanks goes to the rec committee and their volunteers). The turn out for the party was great and I think everyone who came had a good time enjoying the good food, entertaining band, exciting give-aways, and the tremendous kinship of spending the day with fellow Team Galveston members. Third, I wanted to highlight the first District Toad in the Road meeting. I heard several good ideas that we're studying and I'll be announcing the actions taken in the weeks ahead.

The annual call for Emerging Leaders will be coming out soon. I strongly support the EL program and routinely spend time and resources providing professional development opportunities for the current EL group. The EL program requires candidates to work hard, mostly on their own personal time. Yet, if you ask anyone of the EL's they would tell you that it's a terrific experience. When the call goes out for EL candidates this year, I encourage you to consider applying.

I'm optimistic as we start 2005. I think it will be a good year for the Team. We have a FY05 budget now and are clearly headed toward another year of 100% plus in execution. Your task is to continue to execute and do so with gusto. We'll continue to have an increasing number of retirements this year. Still, we are a strong organization that will fill those shoes and continue to perform at the high level that Team Galveston is known for all along the Texas coast.

Trail continued from page 1...

remain available for flood control as well as to provide diverse recreational opportunities for the citizens of the west Houston area."

The new section of trail begins at the intersection of Fry Road and Highlands Knolls. It travels along the abandon right of way for Highlands Knolls before entering Barker Reservoir. The trail winds along the banks of flood control ditches, crosses over Buffalo Bayou, and continues on to the George Bush Park Equestrian Parking Lot. A spur, added to the south of the trail, connects it to the Fun, Fair, Positive Soccer Complex located on Westheimer Parkway.

The centerpiece, of the paved 10-foot wide trail, is an approximately 1,100 feet section of boardwalk connecting a steel bridge that spans Buffalo Bayou and associated wetlands. At this point the trail is approximately 10 feet above the ground giving the nature lover an excellent view of the bottomlands along Buffalo Bayou and the wildlife associated with it.

This wonderful trail system throughout west Houston and Harris County continues to expand through a cooperative partnership between the Corps of Engineers, Harris County Precinct 3, the City of Houston, and the Energy



The ribbon-cutting was held at the bridge entrance. Richard Long, park manager of the Houston Project Office is pictured second to the left.



The new trail at George Bush park.

Corridor, a business organization, interested in improving the quality of life in the area, and centered in the Hwy 6 / I-10 area. Currently, over 20 miles of trail incorporate the new trail, the Barker-Clodine Road Trail, the top of Barker Dam and the 9-mile Terry Hershey Park Trail

system. Plans are under way to dramatically expand the system by tying the City of Houston Cullen Park Trail into Bear Creek Park and planned trails along Addicks and Barker Dams and the into the subdivisions north and west of Addicks Reservoir.



Hey it's Santa Claus (Rick Harrison, chief of real estate)! This was Rick's second year of portraying St. Nick at the holiday party.



Chief of Program and project management, Herbie Maurer and wife, Gloria show off their dancing moves.



Grandson Robert shows grandma Roseanne Theobald, program management (Mrs. Claus) how to hula-hoop during the hula-hoop contest.



They make such a wonderful couple! Cheryl and Kenny Jaynes, regulatory, get a little cozy at the party.



David Torrez, northern area office



Carol Hollaway, planning and her daughter smile for the camera.



Alicia Rea, regulatory.



Roslyn Colston, bay area office, Helene Kieslich, protocol, and Mike Kieslich, chief of operations, smile while enjoying the holiday party.



Trina Ruse, engineering, smiles for the camera.



Marinanne Sefcik, EEO, and her guest pose for the camera. They were the winning recipients of a wooden sleigh and reindeer, one of the many door prizes.



The crazy antics of Travers Powell, IMO and Michelle Clarke, EM.



Sharon Tirpak, planning and Andrea Catanzaro, environmental, smile for the camera before they dig into their Italian meal.



Suhail Idress, project engineering, and his wife, enjoy some holiday chocolate cake.



Gail Stewart, project engineering, shows off her pool skills.



Grace Procter, operations.

DoD selects first group for NSPS: three Army Corps of Engineers' Divisions among those selected

Three U.S. Army Corps of Engineers divisions and their subordinate districts will be included in the initial implementation of the Department of Defense National Security Personnel System (NSPS). DoD plans to convert employees in grouping called Spirals.

Spiral One will include approximately 300,000 general schedule, U.S. - based Army, Navy, Air Force and other Department of Defense civilian employees. Spiral One will be rolled out in three phases over an 18-month period beginning as early as July 2005.

The first group in Spiral One will number about 60,000. In addition, the NSPS Labor Relations system is scheduled to be implemented across DoD by summer 2005.

The Corps' South Pacific Division, San Francisco, Calif.; Southwestern Division, Dallas, Texas; and Mississippi Valley Division, Vicksburg, Miss.; were selected to take part in the first group of the Spiral One implementation. Approximately 8,300 Corps employees will be included in the first grouping of Spiral One. Other Corps of Engineers organizations will be included in future groupings in Spiral One.

Since NSPS was signed into law on Nov. 24, 2003, DoD officials and the Office of Personnel and Management have been working with DoD employees, to include supervisors, managers, human resources and equal employment opportunity practitioners, general counsel and financial management professionals, and union officials to develop design options for the new civilian personnel management system.

The proposed regulations will appear in the Federal Register this winter, which will initiate a formal public comment period, as well as a period for a formal "meet and confer" process with employee representatives to discuss the proposed regulations.

Upon completion of the comment period, the department will develop more specific implementing regulations, which will be finalized in the spring.

The announcement of the first phase of Spiral One participants at this time allows the leadership of those affected organizations to position themselves and look ahead to

help prepare DoD employees for the conversion. This will include training in what are called "soft skills," such as interpersonal communication, team building, and conflict management, to help people adjust to the change.

Spiral Two will comprise the remainder of the eligible workforce and will be initiated following an assessment of Spiral One and after the secretary of defense certifies the Department's performance management system.

Spiral One will provide the basis for this certification prior to the deployment of Spiral Two. Spiral Three will comprise the DoD labs should current legislative restrictions be eliminated.

Congress authorized the new personnel system as part of the fiscal 2004 National Defense Authorization Act.

"NSPS provides an opportunity to improve the effectiveness of the department through a simplified personnel management system that will improve the way it hires and assigns, as well as compensate and reward its employees," said Navy Secretary Gordon

England, the DoD senior executive overseeing NSPS.

In a written welcoming statement to all employee participants in Spiral One, Mary Lacey, Program Executive Officer for NSPS, said, "We will gain experience with the procedures we put in place, and I am counting on you to provide feedback in identifying any improvements as we implement the system to the entire workforce."

England called the implementation of NSPS a historic occasion that will provide challenges and opportunities to manage change in the human resources arena in a beneficial and productive way to support the modern missions of the Department of Defense.

The new system will be fully implemented in the July 2007/January 2008 timeframe. To view the NSPS Spiral One participants: <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Dec2004/d20041214osd.pdf> For additional information about the Department of Defense National Security Personnel System (NSPS), please visit www.cpms.osd.mil/nsps.

Corps and store owner reach settlement on violation

A store owner on South Padre Island, Texas, and the US Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston District, have reached a settlement agreement resolving a violation of Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Remediation for Resolution of the violation will involve restoration of water circulation in an area of the Bahia Grande Unit of the Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge.

Alon Carmeli, owner of "The Palace," constructed the store over 4,600 square feet of wetlands without a Department of the Army permit.

In the voluntary settlement, Carmeli agreed to pay \$15,000, which will be contributed to a Corps approved non-profit organization for the purpose of funding a project that will result in the restoration of waters of the U.S., including wetlands. The project will involve the restoration of water circulation through Paso Corvinas into a 413-acre area on the Bahia Grande Unit of the Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge in Cameron County.

Jadwin Building goes through transformation

Have you noticed the difference? Can you see better, breath cleaner air, or have fewer headaches? Maybe the difference isn't noticeable to the eye, but the environment of the Jadwin Building has recently gone through an improvement stage.

"From Oct. 28 thru Nov. 3, the Jadwin Building underwent a transformation, a major retrofit project of the building's 1200 plus light fixture," said Eric Procter, logistics.

After competitively announcing the project on the GSA Advantage website, Contracting Division awarded the job to Ameresco Federal Solutions. The Ameresco proposal outlined the environmental impact calculations for the project as follows:

The energy saved as a result of the proposed lighting project at the Jadwin Building will prevent the annual pollution of 110, 464 pounds of Carbon Monoxide, 28,568 grams of Sulfur Dioxide, and 66,278 grams of Nitrous Oxide. This is the annual equivalent of:



Technician prepares to install new ballast in RMO light fixture. One down, only 2399 to go!

- Removing 23 cars from our highways
- Planting 48 acres of trees
- Saving 15,063 gallons of gasoline

The buildings original 12-year-old light fixtures were gutted as contractors replaced ballasts and light tubes. The old magnetic T12 ballasts were replaced with new T8 electronic ballasts. The new ballasts consume less energy and produce less heat. New fluorescent lamps compatible with the new ballasts were also installed; the new lamps are smaller, slightly brighter and contain less mercury than the old lamps which is always a concern for lamp disposal.

Since the new components consume less electricity the facility will realize a savings on each month's utility bill. An added cost savings benefit is with the light fixtures components producing less heat, the load on the buildings air conditioning system is reduced.

However, the energy savings and conservation effort doesn't have to end here at the Jadwin. Advanced energy technologies are readily available for homes as well; many incandescent fixtures can be upgraded to fluorescent; while programmable thermostats can reduce energy consumption and ultimately your personal energy costs!

Guest Column: The computer facts of life

by Marney Mason

There are some serious misconceptions going around about computer usage in the District. I would like to address these gently to let you know what is and is not true.

The bottom line is this: Everyone in the district signed a statement of acceptable use when they got their LAN passwords. Every time you log into the network you have to affirm, at least twice, that you understand what is and is not allowed.

If you need a refresher, maybe you should read the screens before you click “OK”. If you would like to see the statement you signed, stop by and we will make you a copy (you were given one when you signed it.) We are all adults and hopefully responsible enough to help keep our network safe and “Networthy”.

Number 1. The computer on your desk is NOT YOUR computer. It is a government asset, intended for government work in a government office. While there is a provision for limited personal use (just like with official telephones) this is limited as to what you can “surf” and personal use should be approved by your supervisor. The computer you take home, for flexiplace agreements or whatever is not your family computer. It is also a government computer and having it at home is a privilege.

Having dial-up access to the network is known as “Elevated Privelege”. This can be revoked for any transgression. It is not an inherent right.

Number 2. E-mail is not a free speech forum. See the above paragraph for limitations on personal use of e-mail.

E-mail is a burden for many people who get scores of e-mails daily. The official e-mail alone is MORE than enough to totally bog down our server, and cause it to lock up. Then to have individuals, under the guise of freedom of speech, send out politically charged PowerPoint Shows, to 400 employees; and then to have some of those reply with hundreds MORE e-mails is unsustainable.

We have provided a forum for these kinds of messages, where it is OK to post whatever (within the limits of good taste and common sense). We also have an electronic bulletin board, where you can sell your car, your boat, your dog, or even your kids.

Number 3. We haven’t left the Internet “open” because we do not care where you surf. All of these items get back to “personal use”. There is allowance for personal use of the Internet too. Just do not surf any “questionable sites”. If you have to ask if it is OK, it probably isn’t. Using the Internet to order flowers for your sweetie, or a present for

your child, during a break is not bad.

Using the Internet to make hotel reservations for a TDY trip, or even for a personal trip is also OK. Using the Internet to sell your government computer is bad. Using the government computer for personal gain is a felony.

Our myriad requiements make it necessary for us to have liberal Internet access. Don’t abuse it.

Number 4. IMO does not watch everything you do on the network and does not wait for an opportunity to pounce and get you into trouble. Be realistic. There are 14 people in IMO - when they are all here. They are all fully employed and I do not have a “LAN Nazi” to watch what everybody is doing ALL THE TIME.

We do scan the network occasionally for unauthorized software, but that is about the extent of it. If there is probable cause, we can monitor all the Internet usage of an individual and use the results of that monitoring as evidence - even in court.

Number 5. You cannot download software from the Internet, nor can you bring in floppy disks, CDs or any other media and download your own. The software we install is what we have identified as being necessary for you to do your job. If you need something else to do

your job, we will install it for you. You are not authorized to install “toy” programs, or games, or search assistants, or Instant Messenger programs, or music download programs, or screen savers or any software not specifically authorized by the Chief of Information Management.

If we see unauthorized software during a scan, we will ask you to remove it, or we will come remove it for you. If you keep loading unauthorized software, we will have to take more stringent measures. All of these programs have the potential to bring unwanted additions to our network.

What is on OUR network can get to the Army network, and thus becomes a serious force protection and homeland security issue.

Beyond “viruses” and “Trojan Horses” and “Worms” there are all kinds of “Ad ware”, “Scum ware”, “Spy ware” and “Smut ware” which can install a whole bunch of stuff you never wanted on your system. This is done silently and surreptitiously so you might not even know it is there. Don’t install stuff on your government computer.

If we all work together, we can keep a relatively lassiez faire internet policy in place. If not, we might have to impose draconian measures which will cause headaches for everyone.

Castle Comments

CFC Update

Thank you Team Galveston! We didn’t quite make our goal of \$29,000.00 but we did a great job anyway!

Pledges and donations totaled \$26,574.42 which was 91.6% of our goal. What is amazing about the amount of money raised is that 98 people pledged or donated money to make that \$26,574.42. About 24.5% of our workforce participated in the campaign. This is a little lower participation than the past couple of years. Maybe next year we can increase participation.

Remember a couple of dollars a pay period can really make the difference.

I would also like to thank the Office Coordinators for their help and COL Haustein for his support of the CFC.

Sharon Tirpak
CFC District Coordinator

Retiree News

Billy Faust, retiree from IMO, has a new granddaughter. Ilana Mercy Faust was born on December 10th to Robert and Olivia Faust and weighed 7 lbs 14 ounces. She is 19" long. Ilana has a sister Isabelle and a brother Isaiah. Great Aunt is *Sandra Blackwell in Real Estate*.

Condolences

Lilly Fields, retiree from the Logistics Management Office passed away Dec. 8 at her residence. Services were held at Hayes Funeral Home in Hitchcock.

Carolyn Bonham, wife of retiree *Ken Bonham*, passed away on Dec. 2 at the University of Texas Medical Branch, Galveston. Services were held Dec. 7 at the First United Methodist Church of La Marque, Texas.



Army Civilian Corps Creed

I am an Army Civilian – a member of the Army Team

I am dedicated to the Army, its Soldiers and Civilians

I will always support the mission

I provide stability and continuity during war and peace

I support and defend the Constitution of the United States and consider it an honor to serve the Nation and its Army

I live the Army values of Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage

I am an Army Civilian